

11-27-12 2:30pm

Thank you for giving me this time and this opportunity to tell you why I believe SB 1312 should become law.

Children across our state are suffering. More than 32,300 children a year are reported abused and or neglected in our State- and these are just the children reported. There are thousands more children left or placed with abusive parents by our courts who fail them. I am here today to testify on behalf of murdered children, specifically my grandson, Sean Michael Sowards - I am Sean's Voice. Sean was just 2 ½ years old when his mother tortured and murdered him in June of 2007. His mother was a lifelong ward of the State with known mental health issues. But only the State knew this. I reported my suspicions of abuse when Sean was just 4 months old. I was ignored and consequently denied access to my grandchildren by my son and the children's abusive mother. But after my complaint, numerous strangers, and even relatives from her side of the family, also reported the actual witnessed abuse my precious grandson endured throughout his short life. Each of them, too, were ignored – EVEN though the State's knowledge and these reports were huge red flags, and the writing on the wall of my grandson's fate. I, we, our family – is just one – one of thousands of families in our State who now suffer, and will continue to suffer the rest of our lives with such heart wrenching loss; Such senseless, cruel pain to an innocent child, and suffering - all of which could have been prevented. The devastation to our families losing our beloved children to such unconscionable and preventable cruelty is indescribable. It is unbearable to know that you did everything within your power to protect a child so loved, but failed because those in the position to help, those who were suppose to help you protect - did nothing. I pray you will never know this pain. But, I also pray your hearts are open – that you are able to at least feel enough of our pain to understand it. I pray you will never know what it is like to go to sleep at night with images in your mind of a beloved, beaten child in his final resting place – begging the Lord to take away such horror. It is impossible to sleep when you not only know, but now feel the pain of every child - waiting - to be rescued. I begged for help for my grandson – I now beg all of you for your help – please help me protect the thousands of children still suffering – and help me prevent another family knowing our pain – PLEASE... do not ignore us. Please do not ignore the voices of these silenced children – please hear, and heed our Sean's Voice.

Thank you again for your time and attention and may God be with you in your decisions for the precious children of our State.

*E. Elizabeth Sowards*